

FACT SHEET

Company: Nelson Galvanizing Inc.

Location: 11-02 Broadway, Long Island City, NY

Situation: This company is a job shop, hot-dip galvanizing business located in a commercial area of Long Island City, approximately 1/8 of a mile from the East River. The galvanizing process consists of acid treating bare metal to remove scale and rust and to heat the metal part to about 800°F. After the acid treatment, the metal parts are hung on steel wires and dipped into a brick tank of molten zinc. The zinc metal becomes plated to the underlying metal part and forms a protective coating on the part. Larger metal parts that cannot be hung from wires are dipped into the zinc tank while suspended on a chain from an overhead crane. The company was begun in the early 1840s, and was sold to the present owners in 1967. This company is the source of numerous odor and smoke complaints, and a few years ago the NYCDEP required the owner to excavate contaminated soil from its property. The soil, contaminated with metals and acids, is being stored inside the building in 55-gallon drums. A few weeks ago the NYCDEP requested that EPA inspect the facility to determine if a Superfund removal action was warranted by EPA. On 11/19/90 two members of RPB and a NYCDEP rep. inspected the facility.

Inspection Findings: The building is basically steel beams covered with corrugated sheet metal. The building is approx. 50 feet high at its ridge, and is one block long and 1/2 block wide. There are three garage-type entrance doors, and there are numerous sections of siding missing, exposing the interior of the building. The interior is extremely cluttered with mounds of scrap metal, wire, rubble, bricks, two acid treating tanks, three plating tanks, and hundreds of metal and plastic chemical drums, some empty, but most are filled with chemical wastes. The entire galvanizing operation takes place on a dirt floor. In addition to the drums of excavated soil, the owner is storing drums of metal dross (waste skimmed from the acid cleaning tanks and from the galvanizing tank), numerous drums of spent sulfuric acid and caustics, ferrous sulphate, and scrap metal. One of the three galvanizing tanks was taken out of service and the contents have solidified into a block of zinc approx. 10 feet by 25 feet by 3 feet. There is a sulfuric acid storage tank (reportedly unused), a #2 oil tank, and an active galvanizing tank approx. 6 feet by 3 feet by 4 feet. Drums of acid and caustics and solids are piled 4 rows high in some places, other drums are partially buried in the soil of the floor. Drums are corroded and leaking, and at least one stream of liquid coming from under a door onto the sidewalk has a pH of 4. When the inspection team arrived we found a

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clean-up company working in a Con-Ed manhole. The team was told that Con-Ed uses an old 10 foot diameter gas line as a conduit for electrical lines, and every 3 months a clear up company is called to the site to pump out approx. 7,000 gals. of acidic (pH4) water that accumulates in the conduit. All evidence points to Nelson Galvanizing as the company responsible. Such evidence includes the facts that no business within 4 blocks of the conduit uses large amounts of acid in its process, the conduit is located about 10 feet away from a doorway at Nelson next to the acid tanks, there are standing puddles inside the Nelson premises directly adjacent to that doorway (the owners have conveniently placed a large pile of debris in this area to preclude a proper inspection of the floor).

There is also a boiler room inside the building that is actually no more than a sheet metal partition. Inside this room the team found a small package boiler in the worst physical condition ever seen by one inspector who had done hundreds of boiler inspections when serving in the Air Compliance Branch. This boiler had steam leaking from numerous cracks, loose fitting, broken welds, etc. It is unlikely that this boiler had been either inspected or repaired within the last 15 years. In the inspector's opinion this boiler is not far from a major shell failure which would result in a severe boiler explosion. Just outside of the 'boiler room' the owners have stacked the majority of the drummed wastes. If the boiler should explode the force of the explosion would destroy these drums, spreading their contents for blocks.

The owner of the business stated that business was bad, due to competition and his inability to pay for repairs to the larger galvanizing tanks. He admitted that bankruptcy was a very strong possibility. A Dun & Bradstreet profile of this company was obtained from NEIC. It reveals that the company has no assets other than the property, and in the last two years has 5 judgements and 4 suits filed against it in Queens and state court, including IRS and state tax court, so it appears that the company is indeed in financial difficulty. There is a very strong possibility that, faced with perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars in disposal costs, this company will go under and the owner will just walk away from everything.

NYC should initiate action to close this facility, thus making it easier for EPA to initiate a removal action should the State request our assistance.